

Easement - term  
expired

CH-368

SKIPJACK "MARY W. SOMERS"  
St. Mary's City  
Private

1904

The "Mary W. Somers" is a Chesapeake Bay skipjack built in 1904 at Mearsville, Virginia. She is a sailing vessel with sloop rig and has a registered length of 41.9 feet and a beam of 14 feet. Her overall length, including bowsprit, is 57 feet, and she draws 3.5 feet of water. The standing rigging is old style, i.e., shrouds are secured by deadeyes and lanyards. The small cabin sleeps two to three crew. Below deck is a hold for cargo, divided by the centerboard well. A longhead below the bowsprit includes a decorated and carved trail board of traditional motif in gold leaf and colored enamels.

Rising costs and dwindling oyster harvests forced Chesapeake watermen to seek a replacement for the large and expensive bugeye in the 1890's. The economy of construction and the working characteristics of the skipjack made it very successful for the short period before the gasoline engine was generally accepted on the Bay. When oysters weren't being harvested, the skipjacks were used for hauling fresh produce, lumber, and livestock to market in Baltimore and Washington. The working skipjack fleet presently consists of about 25 boats, a number fast dwindling from the thousands once operated. The "Mary W. Somers" is not one of the working fleet.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Chesapeake Bay Skipjack, "Mary W. Somers"

AND/OR COMMON

Chesapeake Bay Skipjack

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

(Formerly on St. Inigoe's Creek) Goose Bay Marina, Goose Bay Lane

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

(Formerly St. Mary's City)

X VICINITY OF Welcome

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

CODE

24

COUNTY

St. Mary's

CODE

037

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☐ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☒ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☐ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☒ WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☒ COMMERCIAL☒ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER:

X Boat

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

1/9/84 Educational Alternatives, Inc.

NAME

~~Thomas Rowe~~

Dr. Raymond Hartjen

P. O. Box 265

Port Tobacco, MD 20677

STREET &amp; NUMBER

~~Box 71~~

CITY, TOWN

~~St. Mary's City~~

VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland 20686

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE.

Vessel Documentation Office

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Dept. of Transportation, U. S. Coast Guard

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Washington, D. C.

STATE

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

---

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

---

The "Mary W. Somers" is a Chesapeake Bay skipjack christened and built in 1904 at Mearsville, Virginia. She is a sailing vessel of sloop rig with one mast 49' above deck. She has a register length of 41.9 feet and a beam of 14 feet. Her overall length, which includes bowsprit, is 57 feet, and she draws 3.5 feet of water. Included on the deck is a 100 pound anchor, a windlass, port and starboard dredge rollers, a steering wheel, a rudder screw, davits over the stern for yawl boat, and a 43 foot boom. The standing rigging is old style, i.e., shrouds are secured by deadeyes and lanyards. The running gear includes bob stay, jib halyard, main halyard, lazy jacks, down haul, etc. There is a small cabin with companionway. It has three port windows, sleeps two to three crew and has deck iron for a stove pipe. Below deck is a hold for cargo, divided by a centerboard well 13 feet in length. A longhead below the bowsprit includes a decorated and carved trail board of traditional motif in gold leaf and color enamels. Much of this vessel's construction is original and replacements in construction and rigging have been made in the original style.

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Crafts	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the skipjack, "Mary W. Somers", as well as the rest of the skipjack fleet, lies in their unique survival as the last "working sail" in North America.

A brief history of the development of the skipjack can be synopsized from M.Y. Brewington's book, Chesapeake Bay, A Pictorial Maritime History.<sup>1</sup> Of the half dozen or so sailing vessels to be developed on the Bay since its settlement in the seventeenth century, the skipjack was the last to come into being. Its design, taken from the skiffs used to work crab-trot lines on the Lower Eastern Shore, resulted from an economic depression in the early 1890's and a simultaneous drop in oyster production. The early skipjacks were economical boats, being comparatively easier and cheaper to build and in good weather requiring only one man to operate both the boat and the dredge. The skipjacks gradually increased in size until they were large enough to take their catch to the cities rather than selling it to the "buy-boats." These larger vessels were built by professional shipbuilders rather than by the watermen.

The skipjack, among other sailing craft, saw year-round service in commerce until the advent of better roads and freight hauling by truck. Lumber, farm products, and coal were transported to and from ports around the bay area. Until World War II, it was common to see twenty-five or more skipjacks laden with watermelons and cantaloupes at Long Dock and at Fells Point in Baltimore. Washington and Georgetown also received the goods of commerce by this means of transportation.

Today the skipjacks are used for the dredging of oysters in the Maryland waters of the Chesapeake, from November through April.

<sup>1</sup>M.Y. Brewington, Chesapeake Bay, A Pictorial Maritime History (Cambridge, Md.: Cornell Maritime Press, 1956), pp.65-66.

# MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CH-368

Beitell, Edwin, Lif on the Potomac.  
Brewington, M. V., Chesapeake Bay, A Pictorial Maritime History.  
Brewington, M. V., Chesapeake Bay Log Canoes and Bugeyes.  
Burgess, Robert H., This Was Chesapeake Bay.  
De Gast, Robert, Oyster Men of the Chesapeake.  
Maryland Historical Society, Archives of Maryland.  
Pogue, Robert, History of St. Mary's County.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY N/A

UTM REFERENCES

A	118	371581210	41212+531210	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Thomas Rowe, Associate Professor, St. Mary's College of Maryland

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Owner-master of skipjack "Mary W. Somers"

July 15, 1975

STREET &amp; NUMBER

TELEPHONE

Box 71

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

St. Mary's City

Maryland

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ☒STATE ☐LOCAL ☐

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*John N. Pence*

3/18/76

TITLE

DATE

### FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

CH-368

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Chesapeake Bay Skipjack Mary W. Somers

Continuation sheet Charles County, Maryland Item number 2, 4, and 10 Page 1

2. LOCATIONGoose Bay Marina, Port Tobacco River  
Port Tobacco vicinity  
Charles County (Code 017)4. OWNER OF PROPERTYEducational Alternatives, Inc.  
Raymond H. Hartjen, Ph. D., Executive Director  
P. O. Box 265  
Port Tobacco, Maryland 2067710. GEOGRAPHICAL DATAU.S.G.S. Quadrangle: Mathias Point, MD-VA  
UTM References: 18-320980 - 4257890Prepared by Peter Kurtze  
Assistant National Register  
Administrator  
Maryland Historical Trust  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

November 7, 1985

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC

Chesapeake Bay Skipjack, "Mary W. Somers"

AND/OR COMMON

Chesapeake Bay Skipjack

## 2 LOCATION

STREET &amp; NUMBER

St. Inigoe's Creek

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

St. Mary's City

VICINITY OF

four

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Maryland

24

St. Mary's

037

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

## CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☐ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☒ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☐ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☒ WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ MUSEUM☒ COMMERCIAL☐ PARK☒ EDUCATIONAL☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ RELIGIOUS☐ GOVERNMENT☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ MILITARY☐ OTHER:

X Boat

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Thomas Rowe

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Box 71

CITY, TOWN

St. Mary's City

VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland 20686

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE.

Vessel Documentation Office

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Dept. of Transportation, U. S. Coast Guard

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Washington, D. C.

STATE

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# DESCRIPTION

CH-368

## CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT  
☐ GOOD  
☐ FAIR  
☒ DETERIORATED  
☐ RUINS  
☐ UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED  
☐ ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

☐ ORIGINAL SITE  
☐ MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The "Mary W. Somers" is a Chesapeake Bay skipjack christened and built in 1904 at Mearsville, Virginia. She is a sailing vessel of sloop rig with one mast 49' above deck. She has a register length of 41.9 feet and a beam of 14 feet. Her overall length, which includes bowsprit, is 57 feet, and she draws 3.5 feet of water. Included on the deck is a 100 pound anchor, a windlass, port and starboard dredge rollers, a steering wheel, a rudder screw, davits over the stern for yawl boat, and a 43 foot boom. The standing rigging is old style, i.e., shrouds are secured by deadeyes and lanyards. The running gear includes bob stay, jib halyard, main halyard, lazy jacks, down haul, etc. There is a small cabin with companionway. It has three port windows, sleeps two to three crew and has deck iron for a stove pipe. Below deck is a hold for cargo, divided by a centerboard well 13 feet in length. A longhead below the bowsprit includes a decorated and carved trail board of traditional motif in gold leaf and color enamels. Much of this vessel's construction is original and replacements in construction and rigging have been made in the original style.



PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		Crafts	

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the skipjack, "Mary W. Somers", as well as the rest of the skipjack fleet, lies in their unique survival as the last "working sail" in North America.

A brief history of the development of the skipjack can be synopsized from M.V. Brewington's book, Chesapeake Bay, A Pictorial Maritime History.<sup>1</sup> Of the half dozen or so sailing vessels to be developed on the Bay since its settlement in the seventeenth century, the skipjack was the last to come into being. Its design, taken from the skiffs used to work crab-trot lines on the Lower Eastern Shore, resulted from an economic depression in the early 1890's and a simultaneous drop in oyster production. The early skipjacks were economical boats, being comparatively easier and cheaper to build and in good weather requiring only one man to operate both the boat and the dredge. The skipjacks gradually increased in size until they were large enough to take their catch to the cities rather than selling it to the "buy-boats." These larger vessels were built by professional shipbuilders rather than by the watermen.

The skipjack, among other sailing craft, saw year-round service in commerce until the advent of better roads and freight hauling by truck. Lumber, farm products, and coal were transported to and from ports around the bay area. Until World War II, it was common to see twenty-five or more skipjacks laden with watermelons and cantaloupes at Long Dock and at Fells Point in Baltimore. Washington and Georgetown also received the goods of commerce by this means of transportation.

Today the skipjacks are used for the dredging of oysters in the Maryland waters of the Chesapeake, from November through April.

<sup>1</sup>M.V. Brewington, Chesapeake Bay, A Pictorial Maritime History (Cambridge, Md.: Cornell Maritime Press, 1956), pp.65-66.

# MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CH-368

Reitzell, Edwin, Life on the Potomac.  
 Brewington, M. V., Chesapeake Bay, A Pictorial Maritime History.  
 Brewington, M. V., Chesapeake Bay Log Canoes and Bugeyes.  
 Burgess, Robert H., This Was Chesapeake Bay.  
 De Gast, Robert, Oyster Men of the Chesapeake.  
 Maryland Historical Society, Archives of Maryland.  
 Poque, Robert, History of St. Mary's County.

## GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY N/A

UTM REFERENCES

A 118 371581810 412121531210  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
 C                                    

B                                      
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
 D                                    

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Thomas Rowe, Associate Professor, St. Mary's College of Maryland

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Owner-master of skipjack "Mary W. Somers"

July 15, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

Box 71

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

St. Mary's City

Maryland

## STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE   

LOCAL   

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*John N. Pearce*

DATE

3/18/76

TITLE

### FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

TEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



CH-368

CHESAPEAKE BAY  
SKIPJACK

MARY W. SOMERS

CHARLES COUNTY,  
MARYLAND

18-320980-4257890

7 NOVEMBER 1985

0.4 MI TO U.S. 301  
POTOMAC RIVER BRIDGE 8 MI

ES CREEK  
-650 IV NW



Chesapeake Bay Skipjack Mary W. Somers CH-368  
Charles County, Maryland

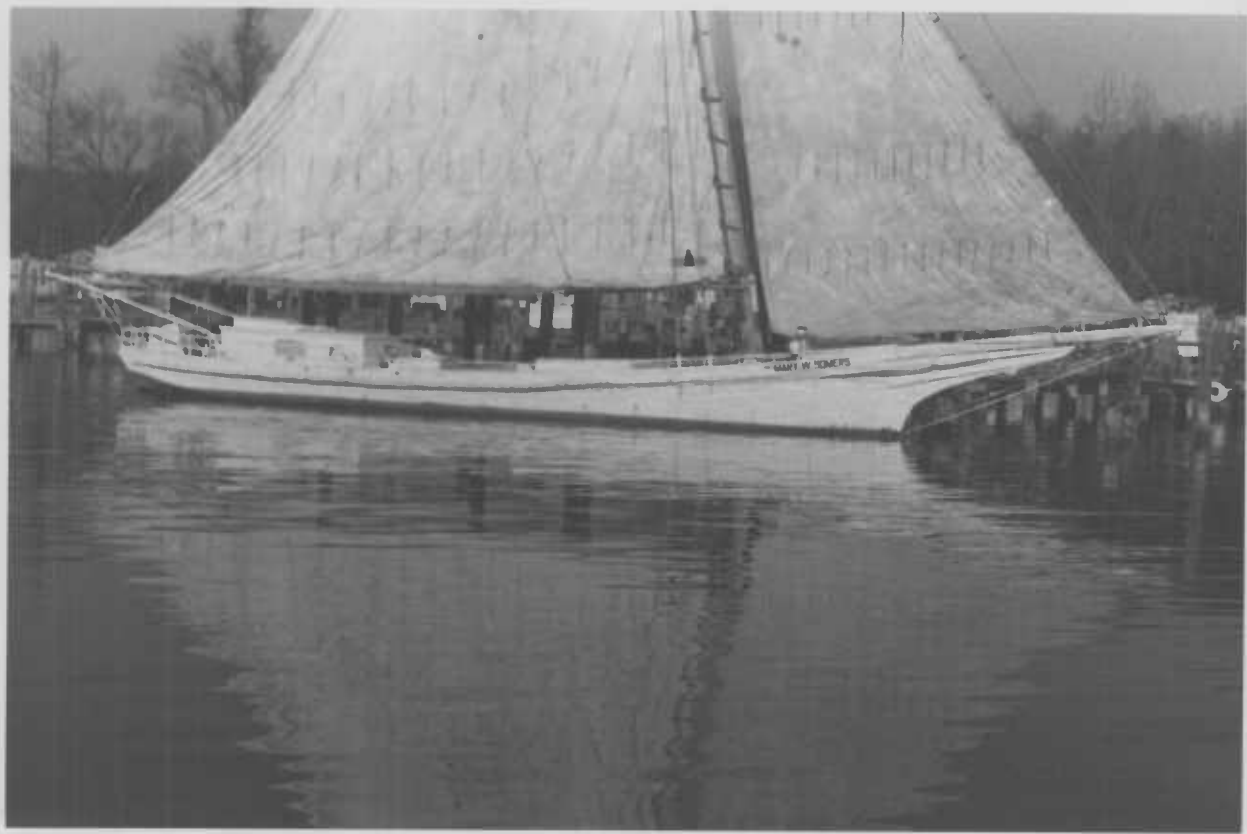
photo by R. H. Hartjen, 29 December 1984

negatives at Educational Alternatives, Inc.

115 LaGrange Ave.,

La Plata, MD 20646

at a berth in Goose Creek, Port Tobacco River  
1/2



Chesapeake Bay Skipjack Mary W. Somers CH-368  
Charles County, Maryland

photo by R. H. Hartjen, 29 December 1984  
negative at Educational Alternatives, Inc.

115 LaGrange Ave.  
La Plata, MD 20646

at a berth in Goose Creek, Port Tobacco River  
2/2





CH-368

62R

D-3669

SE. of rd.

p. 160 <sup>th</sup> ~~SE. of rd.~~



~~SM 305 SKIDJACK MARY SOMERS~~

CH-368



SALES, ETC.  
KODAK  
NEW YORK, N.Y.